

Paul Diegnau Exemplifies a Family Man, Friend and Educator

By Various Minnesota Superintendents

President. According to the Encarta dictionary a president is the highest ranking member of an organization or institution. In the case of the Minnesota Golf Course Superintendents' Association President Paul Diegnau it is a true definition... but Paul is so much more than a great leader. A fantastic family man, friend and educator he emulates the kind of individual we all respect and enjoy being around.

President Diegnau CGCS, claims fame for his environmental progressiveness, political action activities, years of participation on several 'Green' Association Boards, level headed leadership and good spirited competitor. Indeed he has been a steadfast ally of our industry an exceptional leader and supporter of his peers. Take a read upon what some of his friends in the industry have had to say about his qualities.

I met Paul at the interviews for my current position. After I was hired I worked out of his shop for a few months until mine was done. That is when I really got to know Paul. Paul has helped in numerous ways regarding my job. He is a wealth of knowledge and helped with my growth and maturation. He would listen to my ideas and give me constructive advice or just let me figure things out for myself and be a sounding board. Often times he would listen to me with a smile on his face and laugh when I didn't grasp how working for the government is different from the private sector.

He has been in the industry long enough to have seen most turf problems and lived through them. He keeps telling me that "the grass will come back." I also made him feel better when he saw all the dead turf I had. As far as a friend he is pretty fun to hang out with. We go shooting together and ice fishing in the winter. I really enjoy getting him going on politics. He has a good sense of humor and quick wit. I respect him a great deal as a friend and mentor and think he has done a very good job as president of the MGCSA.

- Rob Adams

The Ponds at Battle Creek GC

I can still remember the day I met Paul. (I wonder if he can say the same?) Dale Parske invited us to play Rochester CC so that day I met the Supt. from Riverfalls CC. My old high school golf coach played there so I always heard what good shape the course was in.

I can't remember how he played that day. Then when he moved to Keller soon

the word was that Keller's greens were better than ours!! Then I knew that Paul was good at what he did. (Murf was still boss then ha, ha.)

Working in Ramsey County, the home of the DNR and Mn Dept. of Ag., Paul has really kept up on issues that face us, the MGCSA, whether regulatory or invasive species related. He has served us very well in that way even before he was a board member. As President he has done an outstanding job with all the changes and challenges that we face with regulations (local and national) and a stalled economy. He is a well read person and that shows. He knows his business, you can see that on the Turf Net and through the educational seminars he has brought to our conferences. Moss doesn't grow under his feet, and probably not on his greens. Even at the OTF he usually has something to contribute or great questions to ask.

When preparing to build our new facility I knew his building was one to visit. Again he knew all the regulations that needed to be met with OSHA, Dept. of Labor etc. It was very helpful to get ideas from him.

As a person he's just a nice guy and would probably give you the shirt off his back. I did get to know him better curling. He is a competitive guy. The camaraderie was priceless. He added a lot of personality to the team both on and off ice when we were having conversation with the other team. I'm not a ping pong player so I can't tell you much about that but I have heard about the matches.

As a leader of our association he is like a gentle giant.

- James Bade

Somerset Country Club

Just mentioning the name 'Paul Diegnau' a bunch of words and phrases come to mind and I won't be able to print them all, but will give it a shot if I may; dedicated, passionate, determined, caring for the environment, always willing to help anyone out, bagger when it comes to golf, always in a good mood and pretty good sweeper (curling), more to come dealing with curling.

I've been fortunate to have met Mr. Paul Diegnau about 10 years ago at one of our March Mini Seminars when I was introduced to him by my former assistant, Rob Adams (now Superintendent at The Ponds at Battle Creek, Ramsey County). Once Rob met Paul, he called me to say I



Paul Diegnau, CGCS, with the MGCSA President's Gavel

really have to meet this great guy (Paul) because he thinks I'd really get along with him, boy was he wrong! Just kidding Paul. Rob was exactly on with that prediction; it's been an honor to meet and get to know you all of these years.

Over the years of playing golf together (and Paul taking all my money because he won't give me any strokes), I still won't learn and keep golfing with him year after year. I figured something out. Well, I hope I did - by partnering up with Paul in our Minnesota Wee One event and other MGCSA sponsored events, except when he forms a team and omitting me from it.

Now to this curling thing. Our team consisted up of four members, myself, Paul, James Bade and Dale Parske (our skip). Quick understanding of curling; played on sheet of ice, skip is leader and vocal person on team directing team while rock moving, one person slides rock, two people sweeping in front of rock and skip as mentioned, directing the placement of rock. Well one evening while in middle of game, James slid his rock, Dale skipping and yelling at Paul and I to continue to sweep as a take-out was called. As mentioned earlier, we play curling on ice and ice is slippery, just ask Paul!

Well, I assume Paul won't tell you, so I will. We are both sweeping and Dale is yelling for us to sweep and sweep hard (to keep rock going straight for the take-out) and all of a sudden, I don't have a sweeper with me and you guessed it, Paul decided to stop sweeping, ok he wiped out and thank god didn't get hurt. I being true sweeper kept sweeping until rock took out our opponent's rock, then we all ran to Paul's rescue and yes he was

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Diegnau-

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ok. I must also add, when Paul went down, he was a trooper and somehow avoid touching our rock that was moving, if he touches it, we have to pull it out which means we don't get to count that rock- great job Paul.

If you haven't had opportunity to meet and talk to Paul, I'd take the time to do it because I can assure you that you won't be disappointed. Thanks Paul for all the memories and continued friendship into future.

- Tom Proshok
Brackett's Crossing CC

I haven't known Paul for a long period of time. However, having served with him while he has been President, I can say I'm impressed with the depth of his knowledge of MGCSA and its history. That has been beneficial for me and the other board members as we go about our duties. Paul has a great sense of humor which really helps the flow of the board meetings. Paul also involves board members and consults with them to hear their opinions about various issues that that he must deal with as President. I believe that is a trait of a good leader and it serves Paul and

MGCSA well.

What I have enjoyed most about Paul and working with on the board is that he has gone out of his way to engage me as a new member of MGCSA and the Board of Directors. That has made me a more informed director and his historical perspective has been invaluable to me as a Director.

I'm sure there people out there who have known Paul for a long time. I'll leave the story telling to them.

- Roger A. Stewart Jr. CGCS
TPC Twin Cities

Coming to a municipal operation Paul had little choice but to inherit some of his employees, me being one of them. This setup had the makings for a tenuous relationship, each not knowing what to expect from the other. As the season progressed, we shared similar thoughts and ideas about the golf course. Knowing we could count on each other along the way, we forged ahead all these many years.

As it turned out Paul is what you would expect from a Superintendent, giving you the tools needed to being successful. Be it wisdom, a helping hand or the room to develop, Paul makes it happen. This dedication to his profession carries over to his work for our chapter. Ever vig-



Paul's truck.

ilant, Paul has an eye out for new threats to our livelihood, to lessen the impact and make our voices heard. As always he tries to leave a place or position better than when he arrived.

Prior to his arrival at Keller, the grounds were mowed stem to stern. Through his tireless efforts, golf and nature go hand in hand. Watching the flora and fauna thrive here at Keller gives him great satisfaction, but the one thing he really enjoys is fishing. Few fish find their way to the end of his line, but the stories make up for that.

As many of you know Paul likes to laugh, so if you see him, give him a line from "Seinfeld" to get him chuckling and tell him thanks, too.

- Brett Wenzel
Keller GC

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